This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

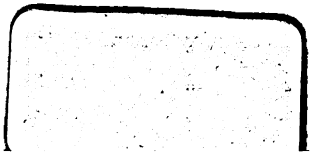
About Google Book Search

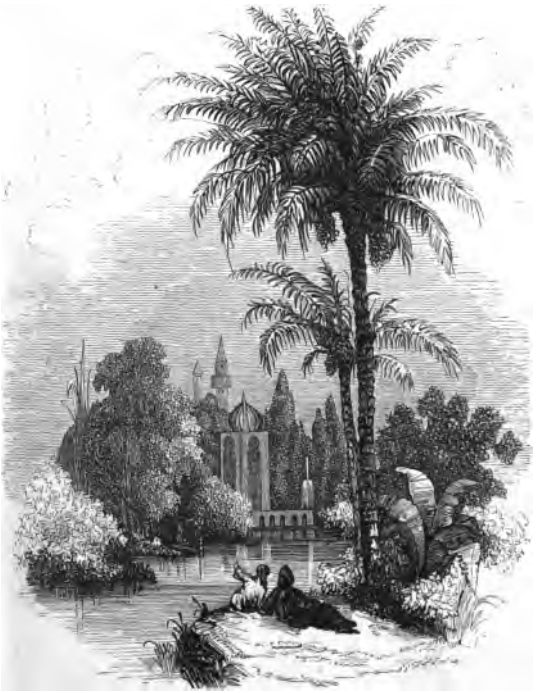
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

KC12439
HN 643H R

KC 12439

HARVARD COLLEGE
LIBRARY





THE DATE PALM-TREE —Page 85.

PUBLISHED BY THE
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,
150 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK

THE

TREES, FRUITS, AND FLOWERS

OF

THE BIBLE.

BY MRS. HARRIET N. COOK.

He spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall.—1 KINGS, 4:33.

PUBLISHED BY THE

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

150 NASSAU-STREET, NEW YORK.

KC 12439

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1846, by R. S. Cook, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Southern District of New-York.

Right of publishing transferred to the American Tract Society.

PREFACE.

MY DEAR CHILDREN:

PERHAPS you have read a little book published not long since by the AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY, which tells you something about the Animals mentioned in the Bible, and gives you more than a hundred texts which speak of the Camel, the Goat, the Peacock, the Turtle-dove, and others. Now, would you like to know what the Bible says about Trees, and Fruits, and Flowers? I have been looking, and I find something about them in the very first chapter, and in the very last chapter, and in a great many chapters between. In the first chapter, I read that God made the grass, and "the fruit-tree yielding fruit;" and in the last, I find something about "the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

You will see by a verse on the title-page that king Solomon, the wisest of men, knew a great deal about trees, "from the cedar-tree that is in Leba-

non, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall;" that is, from the largest trees to the smallest plants. Would it not be *well* for you to know something about them? God made many of them to be *useful* to man; and if you have not done it before, it will interest you to ask how many of all the things we use every day are obtained from plants. Some plants, especially a great many beautiful flowers, seem to have been made chiefly to give us *pleasure*. Do they not seem to say, "God loves to have you happy?" I am sure he "has made *every thing* beautiful in its time."

CONTENTS.

	Page		Page
Almond-Tree,	7	Myrrh,	64
Apple-Tree,	12	Myrtle,	68
Balm,	15	Nettle,	70
Bay-Tree,	18	Oak,	74
Bulrush,	19	Olive,	80
Camphire,	22	Palm-Tree,	85
Cypress-Tree,	28	Pine,	91
Fig,	30	Pomegranate,	93
Fir,	35	Rose,	96
Flax,	38	Spikenard,	98
Frankincense,	43	Tare,	104
Gourd,	49	Vine,	106
Hyssop,	51	Wheat,	112
Juniper,	53	Willow,	115
Lily,	55	Wormwood,	117
Mulberry,	58		

TREES, FRUITS AND FLOWERS.

THE ALMOND-TREE.

The Almond-tree was probably first found in the western part of Asia, and in the countries of which we read most in the Bible. Its fruit was reckoned among the best that grew in the land of Canaan, as we read in Gen. 43 : 11. "And their father Israel said unto them, Take of the best fruits of the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and *almonds*." It was customary in those countries to send presents to distinguished men, particularly when one wished to ask a favor; and Jacob hoped that "the ruler" might thus be led to show kindness to his sons, especially to his beloved Benjamin.

The Almond-tree is found abundantly in China and Barbary. It is also cultivated for its fruit in Italy, Spain, and the South of France; and in England, for the beauty of its flowers. The blossoms resemble those of the peach-tree, but have more variety of color, taking every shade from pure white to a deep pink. We sometimes see a beautiful shrub in this country called the "Double Flowering Almond," but it bears no fruit.

The flowers of the Almond-tree, like those of the peach, appear before the leaves; so a poet speaks of the "silvery almond-flower, that blooms on a leafless bough." In warm countries the blossom comes forth in January or February, and the fruit is ripe as early as March or April. It is perhaps in reference to its ripening so soon that we read in Jer. 1 : 11, 12, "Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond-tree. Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen; for I will hasten my word to perform it."

The leaves resemble those of the peach-tree. The fruit, which is well known in this country, is a nut enclosed in a shell, which is very soft in some varieties, and in others quite hard. There are two principal species, the sweet and the bitter almond, from both of which an oil may be obtained. The oil extracted from the bitter almond is very poisonous, and the fruit is said to be so also, to birds and some other animals. When Moses was about to make the "candlestick of pure gold" to be placed in the tabernacle, God directed that it should have six branches, with three bowls in each branch, made "after the fashion of almonds."

Do you recollect the account of Aaron's rod that is given in the Bible? God had chosen Aaron and his sons to be priests, and they had been solemnly set apart for that office; but some of the princes, "men of renown," were envious of the honor, and brought the complaint, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy; wherefore lift ye up yourselves above

the congregation of the Lord?" Then Moses directed them to come the next day with their censers, and God would show whom he had chosen. They did so; and while they were impiously offering incense, which none but *the priests* were allowed to do, the earth opened beneath their feet and swallowed them up in an instant, with their wives and children, their tents, and all that belonged to them. Even this did not silence the wicked Israelites, and they complained to Moses and Aaron, "*Ye* have killed the people of the Lord." God's anger was kindled against them for their continued rebellion, and he sent a plague among them which destroyed fourteen thousand seven hundred men. After this God directed Moses to take twelve rods, one for each of the tribes of Israel, and write upon each rod the name of the tribe to which it belonged. These were to be laid together for a night in the tabernacle; and in the morning, the rod of the tribe which God had chosen would be found to have blossomed. The next day Mo-

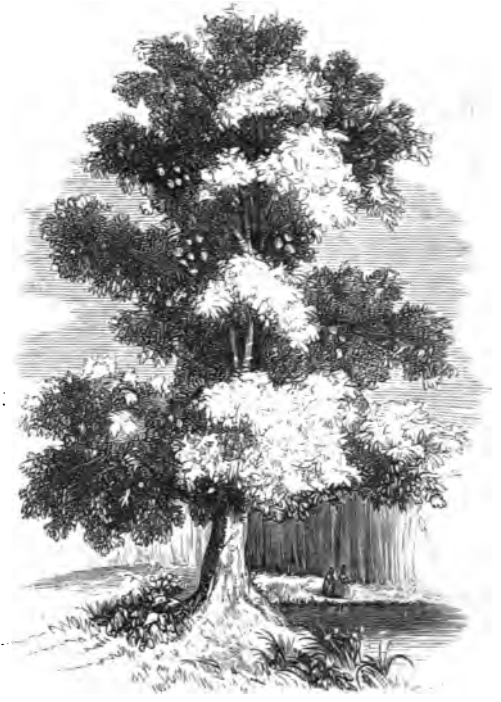
ses took out the rods, and it was found that "the rod of Aaron budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." Then God commanded that the rod should be laid up and preserved, to show that God had chosen the house of Levi, to which Aaron belonged, to be priests for ever.

There is but one other place in the Bible in which the Almond is mentioned: it is in the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes, and the verse is not very well understood. Solomon is speaking of the weakness, the trembling and the fears of the aged, and he says, "They shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the *almond-tree* shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail; because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets." He had just before given the direction, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Can there be any sight more

sad than an old person who has not God for his friend? He may say, like one man in the Bible, "I am this day fourscore years old; and can I discern between good and evil? can I taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing-men and singing-women?" When his eye grows dim, and his ear heavy, and his limbs tremble with age, where can the aged man turn for comfort if he forgot God when he was young, and now "has no pleasure" in seeking him? Oh! if you would not have God forget *you*, and "cast you off in time of old age," do not forget to seek him early. They that seek him early shall surely find him.

THE APPLE-TREE.

It is supposed by many that the Apple-tree mentioned in the Bible was the same as the orange, lemon, or more probably the



THE APPLE-TREE, OR CITRON.

citron-tree. It is spoken of in Solomon's Song, chap. 2, verse 3. "As the Apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

The Citron-tree is not very large, but it is a beautiful object to the eye. The flowers are white, somewhat like the orange blossom; the leaves are handsome, and the fruit, when ripe, has a rich golden color, and resembles the orange or lemon. The flowers, the green fruit, and the yellow ripe fruit are often seen on the tree at the same time; it has then a very rich and beautiful appearance. The flowers, leaves and fruit are all fragrant, and the juice of the fruit is very refreshing to the weary in the hot climates where it grows: "Comfort me with apples" (or citrons) we read in Solomon's Song. We find this lamentation in Joel, 1 : 12. "The vine is dried up, and the fig-tree languisheth; the pomegranate-tree, the palm-tree also, and the apple-tree, even

all the trees of the field are withered; because joy is withered away from the sons of men." Here this tree is reckoned among those which are most beautiful and most valuable to man.

Solomon says, Prov. 25:11, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." Instead of "pictures," the word may mean *lattice-work* or *basket-work;* and perhaps the king had in mind the silver baskets in which the golden fruit was placed when presented to him in his palace. Solomon seems to have thought very much of the gift of speech, and of the importance of using it rightly; he very often mentions it in his writings. In one place he says, "Every man shall kiss the lips of him that giveth a right answer;" and of a virtuous woman, "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness." I hope you will remember this, for I think it may help you to speak wisely, sincerely and kindly. How much we love a person that always does this; one who has

respectful words for the aged and venerable; cheerful and loving words for children; words of comfort for the poor, the sick and the sorrowful; kind and gentle words—words of truth, coming from the heart—for every body. These are indeed "golden apples (or citrons) in baskets of silver;" you cannot prize them too highly.

BALM.

If you look again at one of the verses which I mentioned in speaking of the almond, you will see that "a little balm" was among the valuable articles which Jacob's sons carried for a present to Joseph. It was obtained from the balsam-tree, and was sold for a great price; the merchants who bought Joseph from his brothers and took him away, were carrying "spicery and balm and myrrh" on their camels, to be sold in Egypt. It is said of the ancient and

the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" This precious balm is the blood of Christ, that "balm for every wound" which sin makes in our hearts. When we feel that we have offended God, and are truly sorry that we have so grieved and displeased him, nothing can comfort us but the assurance that there is a healing balm, even "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son," which "cleanseth us from all sin."

THE BAY-TREE.

Rev. Mr. Beadle, a missionary to Syria, says in his journal, "The Bay-tree spreads very much while growing, producing from five to twelve trees from a single root, which stand clustered together in singular beauty." It is mentioned in but a single place in the Bible, Ps. 37 : 35, "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree: yet he passed

away, and lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found." This agrees well with many other passages in the Bible, such as these in the 18th and 20th chapters of Job. "The light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no remembrance in the street. They who have seen him shall say, Where is he? He shall fly away as a dream and be forgotten: yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night. This is the portion of a wicked man from God." But though the wicked is to be forgotten, as unworthy a name on earth, the word of God assures us that "*the righteous* shall be in everlasting remembrance."

THE BULRUSH.

This is a kind of reed, growing abundantly in marshy places on the banks of the

river Nile. An ancient writer in speaking of this river thus alludes to the Bulrush: "Here rises this forest without branches, this thicket without leaves, this harvest of the waters, this ornament of the marshes." It has a triangular or three-sided stem, and is often more than twice as high as a man. There is at the top a bunch of long, fine threads, a little resembling the tassel of broom-corn. The root is thick and twisted, and has many fibres, so that it stands firmly in the ground, but the top is often bent over. This is referred to in Is. 58 : 5, "Is it such a fast that I have chosen? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and spread sackcloth and ashes under him?"

The people of Egypt used in ancient times to make vessels for sailing by tying together bundles of Bulrushes. We read in Isaiah, 18 : 1, 2, "Wo to the land that sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters." It was in an ark or cradle made of such rushes that Moses was placed by his mother on the banks of the Nile.

The Bulrush grows only in wet places, and soon dies if the waters are dried up: we read in Job, 8: 11, "Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water?"

The most useful part of the Bulrush to the people in ancient times, was the outer delicate rind, which could be made into a kind of paper. It was carefully taken off from the stem, and several pieces were spread side by side upon a table; they were then moistened with water from the Nile, and being a little sticky, they adhered to each other, and made sheets of sufficient size to write upon. The pen was a hollow reed; the ink, a colored fluid of some kind. People had no better paper than this for a great many hundred years; and the few books they had were written upon it or upon parchment. They called it *papyrus*. A book cost a great deal of money in those days, because it required considerable labor to prepare a sufficient quantity of the papyrus; and when that was done, every letter must

be made with a pen, because they did not understand the art of printing. The children had no books then; only the rich men could afford to buy books, and even they had very few.

CAMPHIRE.

This plant is twice mentioned in Solomon's Song: in chap. 1:14, "My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi," and chap. 4:13, "Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard."

It is very fragrant, but is not the substance known among us as *camphor;* the name is spelled differently. It is a tall, beautiful shrub, growing in Egypt and the island of Cyprus; it is sometimes called cyprus-flower, but the Arabs call it *henna.* The color of the bark is deep grey; the wood

within is light yellow. The leaves are of a light green; the flowers have each four *petals*, or leaves as you would perhaps call them, of a very delicate yellow color. They grow together in clusters, somewhat like the lilac, and the little stems which support them are red. The *stamens* and *pistils*, by which I mean the thread-like substances which you generally see in the centre of a flower, are white; and the mingling of light green, yellow, red and white in the leaves, stems and flowers, is very pleasant to the eye. The Arab women prize this shrub very highly; they are delighted with the beauty and fragrance of the flowers, which they often carry about with them as a *bouquet*, or wear as an ornament. They value it so much that they are scarcely willing to allow Christian or even Arab women to share it with them. A sort of orange-colored or reddish powder is prepared from the dried leaves of the henna, with which they stain their feet and hands, especially the nails; imagining it an improvement to their beauty.

THE CEDAR-TREE.

This is a most noble and beautiful tree, mentioned forty or fifty times in the Bible. There were formerly great numbers of them, and they were used for timber in making large and handsome buildings. King Solomon built "the house of the forest of Lebanon upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars." Afterwards he determined to build a beautiful temple for the worship of God. His father David had wished very much to do it before he died; but he had been a great warrior and had fought many battles, and on that account God preferred that he should leave the work for Solomon, who was a peaceful king. David in his last days did all he could to prepare for it, by collecting gold, and silver, and brass and stone in great abundance. After Solomon came to the throne, he sent to king Hiram in whose country the cedars grew, telling him of his plan to build a tem-

ple; and he added, "Now therefore command that they hew me cedar-trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants; and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint." King Hiram replied, "I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir. My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea; and I will convey them by sea in floats to the place that thou shalt appoint me." Solomon commenced building the Lord's house in the fourth year of his reign, and it required seven years to finish it. He "covered the house with beams and boards of cedar;" and the walls within were made of the same wood, beautifully carved to resemble flowers.

The Cedar-tree is used in building, not only because it is so large as to make good timber, but because it is so bitter that no insect will touch it, which is one reason that it lasts a great while. It has been found undecayed in a temple that had stood two thou-

sand years. It is of a reddish-brown color, and quite fragrant.

The tree is an evergreen, and has the appearance of great firmness and strength. The branches are sent off with great regularity, and each one by itself is perfect and beautiful, curving gracefully to the end, and having on the whole upper surface the appearance of velvet. The leaves grow in beautiful tufts, and are of a rich green color. A kind of fragrant gum distils from the trunk and cones of the tree, which perfumes the air around.

The number of cedars on Mount Lebanon is small compared with what it once was; in the year 1823 the missionary Fisk counted between three and four hundred of all sizes. Some of the trunks were so large as to require a cord thirteen yards long to reach around them; but these seemed to be formed of three or four trees, which had grown together into one. Many of the trees are marked with the names of persons who have visited them; some of them were cut nearly two hundred years ago.

I think it will interest you if I tell you a few more places in the Bible where this tree is mentioned. In Psalm 92 : 12, we read, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree ; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." In Jer. 22d, we find these words in regard to one of the wicked kings of Judah. "Wo unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by wrong : that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work : that saith I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows ; and it is ceiled with cedar and painted with vermilion ! (a rich red color.) Shalt thou reign because thou closest thyself in cedar ? Thy father (the good king Josiah) judged the cause of the poor and needy ; then it was well with him."

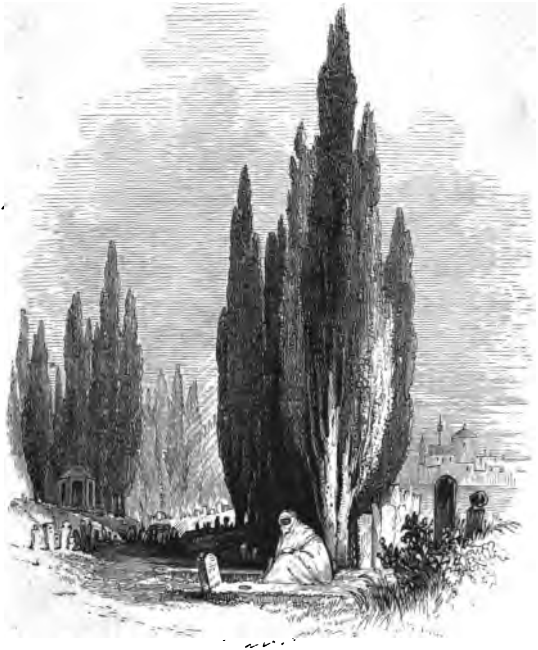
Chests made of cedar are mentioned, Ez. 27 : 24, where it is said the merchants traded "in blue clothes and broidered work and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords and made of cedar." If you recollect

what I have said of the wood of this tree, you will see that it was very suitable for chests which were to contain clothing.

In Ezekiel 31st we read, "The Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches and of a high stature. His height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied and his branches became long. The fir-trees were not like his boughs, and the chesnut-trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in beauty."

THE CYPRESS-TREE.

This tree is mentioned but once in the Bible. It is an evergreen, and grows to a large size. The wood is very heavy and very handsome, and it may be used for furniture instead of mahogany. It is perhaps as durable as cedar, and when used in build-



THE CYPRESS.

ing lasts almost as long as stone itself. In ancient times it was used for coffins; and the *mummies* of Egypt—that is, the bodies of those who died there thousands of years ago and have been kept till now—are often found in cases made of cypress-wood. The leaves of the tree have a dark and melancholy appearance, and branches of it were formerly carried in funeral processions.

It seems from Isaiah 44, that the idols of the heathen were sometimes made of this wood. We read, verses 14 to 17, "He heweth him down cedars and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god and worshippeth it: he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire: with part thereof he eateth flesh: he roasteth roast, and is satisfied; yea, he warmeth

himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my god." Could any words show more plainly the folly of the poor heathen? But there are millions and millions in the world now who worship just such idols as these; and thousands die every day who have never heard of the true God and our Savior. What can you do to send to any of them the knowledge of Christ? Do you give any thing to help the kind missionaries who are trying to teach them the way to heaven? Do you ever pray to God to make you a missionary?

THE FIG.

The Fig-tree grows abundantly in the land of Judea, where our Savior lived and died,

and the inhabitants value its fruit as an important article of food. When the spies were sent by Moses to search out the land of Canaan, the same that was afterwards called Judea, they cut down in one place "a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bore it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates and of the figs," to show how fine were the fruits of the country.

The fruit of the Fig-tree appears before the leaves, shooting out from the joints of the tree. The leaves are large, and *palmated* or hand-shaped. The prophet Habbakuk expresses his confidence in God when he says, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

The Fig-tree produces two or three crops of figs in the course of the year. The first are ripe in June, and are called *boccore*. These are referred to in Solomon's Song, 2 : 11, 13. "For lo, the winter is past, the

rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell." Also in Nahum, 3: 12, where it is said, "Thy strong-holds shall be like fig-trees with the first ripe figs; if they be shaken, they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater." The *kermouse* or summer fig is ripe in August; this is the kind that is usually dried for food. It is sometimes succeeded by another crop of longer and darker figs, which hang and ripen even after the leaves fall, and may be gathered in the spring if the winter has been mild.

In ancient times figs were sometimes pressed into cakes and partly dried for food. When Abigail, the wife of Nabal, went to meet king David, she took with her "two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs." You will find the whole story in the 25th chapter of 1st Samuel. When

David was once pursuing his enemies, some of his men found an Egyptian, who had fallen sick and been left by his master, ready to die with hunger, and they brought him to the king. Then they "gave him bread and he did eat, and they made him drink water: and they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins; and when he had eaten his spirit came again, for he had eaten no bread, nor drank any water, three days and three nights." In return for their kindness in saving his life, he promised to lead David to the place where his enemies were; and David and his men came upon them unexpectedly while they were eating and drinking and dancing, and destroyed them all excepting four hundred young men who rode on camels and escaped.

The Fig-tree in eastern countries is large enough to give a pleasant shade in the heat of the day. A traveller speaks of resting in the shadow of one under which was a well where a shepherd had placed himself and gathered his flock about him. Another says,

"Coming to a little shade of fig-trees, we rested there during the heat of the day, and fed upon such provisions as we had." We read in 1 Kings, 4 : 25, "And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, all the days of Solomon." In Micah, 4 : 4, a time is spoken of when Christ shall reign over the whole earth, and all the nations shall be at peace; and it is said, "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid."

You have often read our Savior's parable of the barren fig-tree, which produced no fruit year after year, though much labor was bestowed upon it. I think that the child who has been taught about Christ, and has heard of all he did and suffered to save us from death eternal, and yet does not *love* him, is very much like the fig-tree which bore no fruit. Do you remember what was to be done with such a tree?

THE FIR.

The Fir-tree is a species of pine, having the same slender, four-sided, needle-like leaves; but is distinguished from it by the circumstance that each leaf grows separately, instead of in clusters of two, three or five. It is a beautiful evergreen, and this fact is alluded to in Hos. 14 : 8. "I am like a green fir-tree." It is often found growing near the cedar, and they are frequently mentioned together in the Bible, as in Isaiah, 14 : 8, "The fir-trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us."

The wood of the fir-tree was used in ancient times, as it still is, for finishing the interior of buildings. Solomon covered the floor of the temple with "planks of fir," and he ceiled one part of the house "with fir-tree, which he overlaid with fine gold." In Solomon's Song, 1 : 17, we read, "The

beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir."

It was also used in ship-building, as we learn from Ezek. 27 : 5, "They have made all thy ship-boards of fir-trees of Senir; they have taken cedars from Lebanon to make masts for thee."

Musical instruments were made of it, 2 Sam. 6 : 5, "And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of fir-wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals." It is still used in making violins, and for the sounding-boards of some other instruments of music.

A peaceful and happy time is often spoken of in the Bible, when our Savior Jesus is to reign over the whole earth—a time when wars shall cease, and all men shall love God and each other. It would seem from some passages in the Bible that even wild beasts will become gentle and harmless, and the earth itself be more fertile and beautiful than now. We read in Isaiah, 41 : 19.

"I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, and the myrtle, and the oil-tree; I will set in the desert the fir-tree, and the pine, and the box-tree together;" and in chap. 55 : 13. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree." In Isaiah, 60 : 13, it is said of the church of God, "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious." It is very delightful to one who loves Christ, to know that he will not always be so much dishonored as now, in the world for which he died; and to believe that the day is hastening on when all the heathen and every nation on earth will delight to serve and obey him.

FLAX.

This is a very useful and valuable plant, growing to the height of two or three feet, and having a delicate blue flower with five petals. The outer covering of the stalk, after being exposed for a while to dew and sunshine, is easily separated into fibres, from which linen is made; and the seed furnishes linseed oil, so much used by painters.

Egypt is still famous, as it was in Bible times, for its fields of flax, though it grows in many other countries. It was undoubtedly a great disappointment to the Egyptians, when their flax was destroyed by the terrible hail which God sent as the seventh plague upon Pharaoh, Exod. 9 : 31. "And the flax and the barley was smitten; for the barley was in the ear and the flax was bolled." It was cultivated in Judea, as we learn from the 2d chapter of Joshua. Two spies had been sent secretly by Joshua into the city of Jericho, to find out whether it would be easy

FLAX.

for the Israelites to take it from the inhabitants. The king heard that they were there, and determined to take them, probably intending to put them to death; but their lives were saved by a woman, who hid them under the stalks of flax which she had laid to dry on the flat roof of her house. For this kindness they promised to save her life and the lives of her family when they should come to take the city; and she fastened a scarlet cord in one of her windows, that they might know in which house she lived. You will find in the 6th chapter of Joshua an account of the singular manner in which the city of Jericho was taken, and the 25th verse will tell you whether the spies remembered their promise to Rahab, and kept it.

It was common for females in ancient times to employ themselves in spinning flax; even the ladies of rich and noble families were often thus occupied. Solomon says in his beautiful description of a virtuous woman, Prov. 31, "She seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands. She

maketh fine linen and selleth it, and delivereth girdles to the merchant."

The "fine linen of Egypt" was very much celebrated in ancient times because none equal to it was then made in any other country; but that which is found wrapped around the mummies, and which was made two or three thousand years ago, is not nearly as fine and handsome as that which is now made by the help of our almost perfect machinery. It is said of Egypt, Isaiah, 19 : 9, "Moreover they that work in fine flax, and they that weave net-works shall be confounded."

Linen is often mentioned in the Bible as the clothing of the rich and great. "And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck." Gen. 41 : 42. "And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple." Esther, 8 : 15. The rich man mentioned in Luke, 16 : 19

was "clothed in purple and fine linen;" yet this did not save him from death, or comfort him when "in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments," and begged for one drop of water to cool his tongue.

The angels who have appeared on earth, and the happy beings who have gone from this world to heaven, are often represented as clothed in white linen, the emblem of purity. "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz. His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning." Dan. 10 : 5, 6. "And the seven angels came out of the temple, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles." In Rev. 19 : 8, it is said of the church, "And to her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." In the same chapter our Savior is spoken of under the name of "the Word of God," as riding on a white horse,

and clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; "and the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

There is a beautiful verse in the 12th chapter of Matthew about our Savior, and you will find the same in Isaiah, 42 : 3, written long before he came into the world, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench." Flax was used by the Jews for the wicks of their lamps or torches, and by "smoking flax" they meant a lamp that was just ready to go out. So when it is said, "He will not quench the smoking flax," the expression beautifully represents his great gentleness and kindness towards the young and the weak. I am sure that even little children need not fear to go to this tender Savior, lay their heads upon his bosom and ask him to love them. When they read such a verse as this, I should think they would say as a dear child did a few days ago, "It often seems to me as if I could run right into his arms."

FRANKINCENSE.

FRANKINCENSE.

This name was given to a very costly and fragrant gum, obtained by cutting the bark of a certain tree which the ancients called *thurifera*, or the *incense-bearing* tree. It was of a whitish or light yellow color, and gave out a very sweet perfume while burning. It was among the precious gifts brought by the wise men to our infant Savior. Matt. 2 : 11. "And when they had opened their treasures they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."

It was formerly laid upon the sacrifices that were offered upon the altar, and was burnt at the same time. "And when any will offer a meat-offering unto the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it and put frankincense thereon." Then the priest was to take a handful of the flour, and a part of the oil, and all the frankincense, and burn them together, "an offering made by fire of a sweet savor

unto the Lord;" and the remainder of the flour belonged to the priest for his own use. Lev. 2 : 1. It was also placed upon the "shew-bread," which was always kept on a table in the tabernacle. This was the direction given to Moses: "Thou shalt take fine flour and bake twelve cakes thereof. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six in a row, upon the pure table before the Lord; and thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be upon the bread for a memorial."

The "incense" so often mentioned in the Bible, was made in part of frankincense, with other rich spices. The direction is given in Exod. 30 : 34. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices, with pure frankincense: of each there shall be a like weight." It was to be most holy unto the Lord, and whoever should make any like it was to be "cut off from his people." The altar for incense was made of choice wood, and covered with

plates of fine gold. It was very small, being only eighteen inches each way, and about a yard high; of course only a small quantity was burned at once.

The time for burning incense was at morning and evening. Exod. 30 : 7, 8. "And Aaron shall burn sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps he shall burn incense. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense." It was to be offered only by the priests, and lighted only with a coal from the fire which was always burning on one of the altars, and which came at first from heaven.

The incense was burnt in a very solemn manner on the great "day of atonement." The high priest then went into the "holy of holies," and it was the only time he was allowed to enter during the whole year. Even then the mercy-seat must be partly hidden by the smoke of the incense which he carried, that he might not approach too near the Holy One. Lev. 16 : 12, 13. "And he (Aaron) shall take a censer full of burning

coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat, that he die not."

These things will explain to you some of the terrible judgements which are mentioned in the Old Testament as having been sent by God upon those who disobeyed in regard to the holy offerings. In Lev. 10 : 1, 2, we read, "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took each of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out a fire from the Lord and devoured them; and they died before the Lord." In the 16th of Numbers we have a sad story of disobedience and its punishment; a part of which you will find in the account of the Almond-tree. The sin of these men consisted in their offering incense although they were not

priests; and it is probable that they used common fire instead of coals from the altar.

You will find, in 2 Chron. 26 : 16–21, an account of a proud and self-willed king who went into the temple to offer incense, though the priests entreated him not to do it, and warned him that it "should not be for his honor from the Lord God." While the censer was yet in his hand the leprosy began to appear on his forehead, and the priests were obliged to thrust him out of the temple, because no leper might remain within its sacred walls. The disease continued until the day of his death, so that he was obliged from that time to live in a house by himself. Surely it is no trifling thing to disobey the infinitely holy God, or to profane his house, or his Sabbath, or any thing that he has set apart for himself.

The prayers of God's children are sometimes compared in the Bible to sweet incense. David says, Psalm 141 : 2, "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense and the lifting up of my hands as the even-

ing sacrifice." It is said in Mal. 1 : 11, "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great, among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering." This doubtless has reference to the incense of prayer, which shall hereafter ascend from all lands. I trust you can sing the sweet words,

"Lord, let my prayer like incense rise,
"And when I lift my hands to thee,
"As in the evening sacrifice,
"Look down from heaven, well-pleased, on me."

The apostle John says in the book of Revelation, "I saw another angel, (in heaven,) having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God out of the angel's hand." This incense represents the merits of our great Mediator,

Jesus Christ, through which alone our prayers are accepted with God.

THE GOURD.

This is not mentioned in the Bible excepting in the story of Jonah, and it is a little doubtful what plant is intended in that place. There are many shrubs in warm countries that grow very rapidly and wither very quickly; but Jonah's gourd is said to have "come up in a night, and perished in a night." "And the Lord God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd. But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered."

Wild gourds are mentioned in 2 Kings, 5 : 39. They are the fruit of a plant similar

to the garden-cucumber, which creeps upon the ground. The gourd when ripe resembles what is sometimes called the mock-orange; it is smooth and yellow, has a hard rind, and is very bitter. The good Elisha was one day surrounded by the sons of the prophets; it was a time of famine, and they had nothing for food. Elisha knew that God would enable him to provide for their wants, and he said to his servant, "Set on the great pot and seethe pottage (a thick soup) for the sons of the prophets." Some one went into the field to try to find vegetables for the pottage, and brought in a quantity of poisonous wild gourds without knowing what they were, and scattered them into the pot. At dinner-time they found that they were unable to eat of the pottage, and told Elisha that "death" was in it. But he directed that meal should be brought and thrown in, and afterwards there was nothing hurtful in it; of course the meal would not have done any good unless a miracle had been wrought.

HYSSOP.

This is an herb growing to the height of about a foot and a half. It has small leaves of a bitter taste, and the flowers grow in a circle around the top of the stems. There is said to be a very small kind, which is referred to in the passage, "And Solomon spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall."

It was used in ancient times, to sprinkle for the purpose of purifying. When one who had been a leper was cleansed, the priest was directed to "take two birds alive and clean, and cedar-wood, and scarlet, and hyssop." Then one of the living birds was to be killed in an earthen vessel over running water; and it was commanded, The priest shall take the other, "and the cedar-wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running

water: and he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field."

When God had determined to destroy all the first-born of the Egyptians, he wished the Israelites to put some mark upon their doors, so that their houses might be known and their children be saved alive. He therefore directed them, after the lamb for the passover had been killed, to "take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts" of the door; and he promised that wherever this blood was seen he would pass by and leave the family in safety.

David once prayed for a pure heart in these words, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow:" and it is a petition that we also need to offer from the very heart.

THE JUNIPER.

This is an evergreen shrub or low tree, bearing cones like the pine. The leaves grow *in threes;* the flowers are yellowish, and the berries are blue when ripe. It flourishes in a dry and sandy soil.

An oil is obtained from Juniper berries which is used in medicine; and although very poisonous, it has often been employed to flavor ardent spirits, especially the kind known as Holland gin. A resin is obtained from the older shrubs, of which *pounce* is made: this is a delicate powder, which is put upon writing-paper after something has been erased with a knife, to prevent the ink from spreading.

In Psalm 120 : 3, 4, we find the question, "What shall be given unto thee, or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?" And the answer is, "Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of Juniper." It is said that branches of Juniper make a peculiarly

hot fire; and it would seem from these verses that the lying tongue is considered as deserving of no light punishment. We know from many other passages in the book of God how he regards it; and if we had but this one, "And there shall in no wise enter into it (heaven) any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie," it would seem to be sufficient to make us constantly watchful over ourselves, and fearful of the least departure from perfect truth.

Job says of some poor people, "They cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper-roots for their meat;" this would not have been done excepting by those ready to die for want of food.

We are told, 1 Kings, 19, that when the prophet Elijah was at one time fleeing from the cruel queen Jezebel, to save his life, "He went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper-tree; and he requested for himself that he might die. And as he lay and slept un-

THE LILY.

der the juniper-tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and behold there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again." The angel allowed him to sleep awhile that he might be refreshed after his weary journey, and then gently waking him, bade him eat again; "because," said he, "the journey is too great for thee." God never forgets his servants when they are in sorrow and suffering, but pities and cares for them, "like as a father pitieth his children."

THE LILY.

There are great numbers of beautiful flowers bearing this name. We have many in our own country, and in warmer climates

there is a still greater variety; they often grow as wild flowers in the open plains. The most beautiful lily is of a pure white color, but there are others having a great variety of shades,—yellow, orange-color and red, and some are spotted with black. They all have bulbous roots like the tulip; the leaves are long and narrow, and seem as if folded through the middle. The flowers grow at the top of the stems, and they have all six *petals*. Many of them have a very sweet and fragrant smell.

The lily is considered almost a sacred flower in eastern countries, and the temples are often ornamented with wood or stone sculptured in the form of lilies. So it was in Solomon's temple; "upon the top of the pillars was lily-work." The "molten sea" which Solomon made for holding water, had "the brim wrought like the brim of a cup with flowers of lilies." The lily was considered an emblem of purity and love, and was classed with the rose for elegance and beauty. Our Savior is represented in Solo-

mon's Song, 2 : 1, as "the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the valley."

The beauty and freshness of the lily are referred to in Hosea, 14 : 5, where it is said of Israel, "He shall grow as the lily and cast forth his roots as Lebanon," (or as the cedars of Lebanon.)

Our Savior once taught his disciples a delightful lesson of confidence in God for the supply of their daily wants. He was probably talking with them as they walked or stood in the open air; and he may have pointed to the birds flying over their heads when he said, "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not better (or of more consequence) than they?" This was to show them that they need not be anxious about their daily food; for if God took care of the birds he would surely remember *them*.

Then pointing to the flowers growing in beauty around them, he says, "Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil

not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

THE MULBERRY.

The two principal varieties of this tree are the *black* and the *white*. This distinction refers to the difference of color in the fruit of the two kinds. That which produces the most wholesome and agreeable fruit is the black. It is a hardy tree, flourishing in the coldest parts of the United States; the leaves are large, rough, and notched at the edges; the berries very abundant and pleasant to the taste. Very few trees are so leafy and verdant, and afford so dense a shade as this, so that it is a highly ornamental as well as useful tree.

The Mulberry grew at a very early period in the western and central parts of Asia, and

it is supposed that they received it from China, which lies on the eastern part of that continent. It was carried from Persia into Turkey, from whence it travelled westward over Europe, and then to America, until it has almost made the circuit of the globe. This is the case with several other fruit-trees as well as the Mulberry, and also with many of our choicest shrubs, plants and flowers.

In this country we seldom see many of these trees growing together, but in some countries of Asia, in the neighborhood of towns or on the banks of rivers, there are large groves of them, which by their deep green color afford a fine contrast to the brighter foliage around them. In the gardens of Constantinople they are much prized for their fruit. Near Beirout and Damascus, towns in Syria, extensive plantations are cultivated, and the silk-worms that feed on them produce a large quantity of silk.

You doubtless know that the leaves and young shoots of the mulberry are the favorite

food of the silk-worm. They are so appropriate for this purpose, that Providence seems to have designed that this use should be made of them. The Greeks and Romans, with all their improvements in the arts, knew nothing of this little insect or the use to which the mulberry leaf might be applied. The people of Europe obtained this knowledge from the Chinese about 550 years before the christian era. Eastern nations have a beautiful proverb to this effect,

"With time and patience the leaf of the mulberry becomes satin."

How wonderful it is that so small a creature can be made of such use to man, and that two things so different as balls of silk and green leaves should be manufactured one out of the other! In these things we see the wisdom and kindness of the great God who made all things, and designed beforehand the use for which they should serve. Man could never have taught the silk-worm to work for him, or have changed the mul-

berry leaf into a substance from which clothes could be made, had not God contrived at first the plan and ordained the means by which it was to be brought about.

The white mulberry is the kind which has been most cultivated for the food of the silk-worm. The leaves are about half as large as those of the black and more tender; the fruit is smaller, not so pleasant to the taste and of a whitish color.

From the allusions to this tree in the Bible, we should suppose it to have been common in Palestine. But it may be well for you to know that there is some doubt whether the mulberry of the Scriptures is like the tree which we know by that name. The Hebrew word is *Baca*, and signifies *weeping*, from which it is inferred that the tree thus named distilled a gum or resin from its trunk and branches. In Psalm 84 : 6, you will find the word *Baca* retained; and in Psalm 78 : 47, it is translated "Sycamore trees," but in the history of the wars between David and the Philistines, it is called the Mulberry, as you

will see in 2 Sam. 5 : 22, 25, and 1 Chron. 14 : 13, 16.

The Mulberry has been called "the wisest of trees," and I will explain to you the reason. It does not put forth its leaves until the weather is quite warm, and there is little danger of its being injured by frost, and then it shoots forth rapidly and abundantly; in a very short time all its boughs are covered with foliage. Now I suppose you know that wisdom consists in saying and doing things seasonably and well; or in other words, at the best time and in the best manner. Our Savior by calling our attention to the lilies of the field, teaches us that we should endeavor to draw some useful hints even from things without life. Happy will it be for you, if you learn a lesson of wisdom from the mulberry-tree. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Eccl. 12 : 1.

Do you wish to be wise? "The fear of

the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." Job, 28 : 28.

There is another peculiarity of the mulberry from which you may derive instruction. Most of our fruit-trees begin to bear about the third year of their growth, and for a few years produce abundantly; but as soon as they pass their prime the fruit diminishes in size and quantity. On the contrary, the mulberry becomes more productive as the tree gets older. May you in like manner go on "from strength to strength;" and every year bring forth abundantly "fruits meet for repentance;" for "every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." Mat. 3 : 8, 10.

MYRRH.

The Myrrh-tree, that is to say, the tree which produced the myrrh so often mentioned in the Holy Scriptures, is not very well known. Some describe it as a small tree that grows about eight feet high, with a thorny trunk, the wood of which is very hard. It is probable that both myrrh and frankincense are the product of trees very nearly related to the balsam-tree which yields the balm of Gilead, of which you have already had an account.

The substance known to us as myrrh, and used in medicine, is a gum brought from Western Asia, of a reddish-yellow color and very bitter taste.

The ancients made use of myrrh as a perfume, and in embalming the dead, as a means of preserving the body from decay. They also mingled it with wine to form a cordial which was very highly esteemed.

The Jews of old, like the inhabitants of

the East at the present day, were very fond of strong perfumes. They sometimes carried myrrh in their bosoms, perfumed their garments, and rubbed their hands and lips with it. This custom is alluded to in Psalm 45 : 8, where the flourishing state of Christ's kingdom is described under the similitude of a glorious queen, "All thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia." And in the Song of Solomon, "My hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet-smelling myrrh:" and again, alluding to Christ, "His lips are like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh." Sol. Song, 5 : 5, 13.

Myrrh was an article of commerce at a very early period. You will find it mentioned among the commodities that the Ishmaelites were carrying to Egypt when Joseph was sold to them by his envious and cruel brethren. Gen. 37 : 25. It appears from Ex. 30 : 23, that it entered into the composition of the holy anointing oil that was used in the service of the tabernacle. But it would make this account too long were I to point

out all the places in which it is spoken of in the Bible. Yet I wish you to observe that it is mentioned in the New Testament, in the narrative both of the birth and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Look at Mat. 2 : 11, and you will see that the wise men who came from the East inquiring for the infant Savior, when they had found him, worshipped him, and opening their treasures, "presented unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh."

This shows that these wise and good men were willing to give up to the service of their Lord the most costly and precious things they possessed. Such is the temper of all true christians. They are ever ready to say, "All for Christ: all for Christ."

We read also, Mark, 19:23, that when our Savior hung upon the cross they offered him for drink "wine mingled with myrrh." Strong drink of some kind was usually given to persons about to suffer death, in order to produce insensibility, and by that means lessen the sense of pain. But Christ refused to drink it, because he came to suf

fer and make an atonement for our sins, and would not set aside one pang that was necessary to make the great work of redemption complete.

I have told you that the ancients used myrrh for embalming the dead. It served that purpose at this time. After the crucifixion, Nicodemus, who at first visited Jesus by night, but had now become open and fearless in his attachment, "brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight," with which he and other friends of the Savior embalmed his body and laid it in the sepulchre.

Why did the Savior endure such humiliation and distress? What was the object of his sufferings and death? Surely you know "that for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich." Are you truly grateful for it? Have you given him your heart?

THE MYRTLE.

This shrub is so beautiful that you will not be surprised to learn that the Jews sometimes called their daughters by its name. *Hadassah*, the Hebrew name of Queen Esther, (Esther, 2 : 7,) signifies a myrtle. It grows plentifully in Judea and the south of Europe, often without being cultivated, and sometimes reaches the height of a small tree. It is usually from six to eight feet high, though in our climate it seldom attains more than half that height.

The boughs are close and form a bushy head like the box. The leaves are of a vivid green, thickly set, small, and ending in a point. It bears a profusion of delicate white flowers, tinged with red, which appear beautiful to the eye amid the shining green leaves, and emit a perfume which some travellers say is sweeter than that of the rose itself. The flowers are succeeded by an oval berry of the size of a small pea, which contains the

seed. The *pimento* or *allspice* sold in the shops and used in cookery is the seed of one species of the myrtle.

Those plants, which do not drop their leaves at the approach of winter, but remain clothed through the year, are called *evergreen.* The myrtle is an evergreen; and on this account as well as for its singular beauty, some ancient nations used it as they did the laurel, to form wreaths with which to crown their heroes when they returned victorious from war. But it is a pity that this fragrant and beautiful shrub should remind us only of fighting and conquest; we will therefore turn to the scriptural use of it, which is far more appropriate and interesting. It is there put for an emblem of peace and prosperity.

The blessings which the world would enjoy under the peaceful reign of Christ were described by the prophet Isaiah (ch. 41 : 19) under the figure of planting the wilderness with the myrtle, the cedar, the box, and other useful and ornamental trees. In the

55th ch. and 13th verse, he says again, "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." This means that a time will come when truth and holiness will prevail where now only sin and misery are to be found. This happy time has been before alluded to in speaking of the *fir*.

Whenever the heart of a sinner is touched by the Holy Spirit, and he begins to love God and his fellow-creatures, a change equally great takes place.

THE NETTLE.

The Nettle is a rough-looking plant, or weed, only remarkable for having small stings upon its leaves, which on its being handled give out a poisonous juice, that

produces a burning sensation accompanied with pain.

In every place in the Bible where this plant is mentioned it is used to represent extreme neglect and desolation. It is a striking emblem for this purpose, as nettles are not usually suffered to grow near the habitations of men; they flourish only in the wildest and most uncultivated places. The prophet Isaiah, in depicting the terrible judgments that should fall upon the land where God's enemies dwelt, says, "Thorns shall come up in her palaces; nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof." Is. 34:13. Hosea uses similar language in showing what would be the condition of Judea when her people should be carried captive to Egypt. Hosea, 9 : 6.

I have no doubt but many children can repeat without the book, the description which king Solomon gives of the slothful or idle man. It is so vivid, that as it is read you can see it in the mind's eye, and might draw a picture from it. "I went by the field

of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction." Prov. 24 : 30–32.

What do you suppose was that "instruction" which Solomon obtained from this sad example? It was doubtless this: that he who hates labor, neglects his proper business, and lives a life of indolence and folly, will not only come to want and bring distress upon his family, but is in danger of losing his soul. Read Mat. 25 : 26–30, and learn what became of the "wicked and slothful servant."

The earth, if left to itself, instead of producing an abundance of wholesome grain, fruits and vegetables for the food of man, would soon be overrun with thorns and thistles and useless weeds. Gen. 3 : 18. You see by this how important industry is, and how necessary and honorable is the calling

of the husbandman. God intended man to live a life of industry. Not only the earth but the heart and mind will run to waste and become a wilderness without it. "Our souls," says the good Dr. Henry, "are our fields and vineyards, which we are every one of us to take care of, to dress and to keep. We are charged with them, to occupy them till our Lord come, and a great deal of care and pains it is requisite that we should take about them."

The nettle is also mentioned in Job, 30 : 7; referring to his enemies, the writer says, "under the nettles they were gathered together." But the original Hebrew word is not the same in this case as in the former instances; and it would seem that the common nettle cannot be intended, as that plant does not grow large enough to afford concealment or shelter to men. Perhaps the bramble or thorn-bush was meant.

THE OAK.

The oak is remarkable for its size, for its long life, and for the strength and durability of its wood. It is a spreading rather than a tall tree, shooting out its boughs horizontally, so as to form a shady and majestic bower. No other tree, except the cedar of Lebanon, has such strong diverging limbs. Its giant branches resist the shock of the winds, and it appears to become more firmly fixed in the earth, the more it is assailed by storms and tempests.

Although so large a tree, its fruit is but a small acorn, of which no use is made in our country except to fatten swine. In the southern parts of Europe some people are so poor that acorns are gathered and used for human food. Savage nations eat them also. The oak-apples that are sometimes found under this tree, are not a fruit, but an accidental production. A small insect pierces a hole in the leaf and lays an egg in the place.

This arrests the sap, which gathers at the spot and forms a round ball like an apple. After a while the egg becomes an insect which eats out of its habitation and the ball drops to the ground.

The oak, on account of an important use to which its timber is applied, has been called "the father of ships." Its majestic size has caused it also to be styled "the king of the forest." The largest oak of which mention is made in history was one that stood in Dorsetshire, England, the last vestige of which has disappeared. It measured 68 feet around the trunk.

This tree is so long-lived that it is sometimes 400 years old before it passes its prime. I have heard that there are in different parts of England ancient oak trees, still so vigorous as to bear acorns, that are known to be more than 1,000 years old.

It is very natural that a tree which lives so long and grows so large, should become a landmark, and an object of note, as we actually find it to have been in Palestine. De-

borah, Rebekah's nurse, was buried under an oak, near Bethel; which from that circumstance took the name of "the oak of weeping." Gen. 35 : 8. When the Israelites entered into a solemn agreement to give up their idols and worship God only, Joshua set up a "great stone," or pillar, as a witness of it, "under an oak," in Shechem. Josh. 24 : 26. The angel that was sent from God with instructions to Gideon, "came and sat under an oak in Ophrah," that belonged to Joash the father of Gideon. Judges, 6 : 11. And it is said, 1 Chron. 10 : 12, that the bodies of Saul and his sons were buried "under the oak in Jabesh." These are but a few instances out of many that might be mentioned to show that a large spreading oak was highly valued among the Jews, and an object as well known as a hill, a river, or a village.

The patriarch Abraham is supposed to have dwelt under an oak in Mamre, or perhaps in a grove of oaks. Many persons who know the Hebrew language very well, are of

opinion that "the *plains* of Mamre," Gen. 18 : 1, should be rendered, "the *oaks* of Mamre." In like manner "the plains of Moreh," Gen. 12 : 6, Deut. 11 : 30, may be read, "the oaks of Moreh." In Judges, 9 : 6, it is said that Abimelech was made king "by the *plain* of the pillar that was in Shechem :" but if you look at a Bible that has references in the margin, you will see that this is another instance in which the word *oak* may be used instead of *plain*.

It was common for the ancients to meet under the boughs of some conspicuous oak to transact important public business, as in the case just mentioned to proclaim a new king. Nor is this custom without example in modern times. It was beneath the shade of a venerable tree (not indeed an oak, but an elm) which grew near Philadelphia, that in 1682 the good William Penn entered into that celebrated treaty with the Indians, that has been well described in these few words, "pledged without an oath, and never broken."

So far I have told you only what is pleasing about the oak; but men are so inclined by nature to do evil, that unless they live nigh to God and are kept by the Holy Spirit from yielding to temptation, they soon abuse the gifts of Providence and make them serve the purposes of sin. Before churches and temples were built, no more solemn place could be selected for the public worship of God than groves of oaks, and accordingly good men assembled there to perform religious services. But very soon the evil of the heart began to show itself, and the trees themselves were regarded with veneration. The oak was considered sacred, and the superstitious regard paid to it was transferred from the nations of the East to the Greeks, and from them to the Druids, or priests, of Gaul and Britain. The prophet Isaiah reproves the Jews for this, and says, chapter 1 : 29, "ye shall be ashamed of the oaks ye have desired."

It was not long before another step in idolatry was taken. False gods or idols

were fashioned out of wood and stone, and set up in these groves to be worshipped instead of the true God. "Under every green tree and under every thick oak," says the prophet Ezekiel, "they did offer sweet savor to all their idols." These idolatrous groves are often mentioned in the history of the kings of Judah and Israel. They were so profaned by these uses that God commanded them all to be cut down and destroyed.

I have not pointed out half of the places in which the oak is mentioned in Scripture. It is supposed that more than one kind of tree is included under that name. In particular, the *terebinth* or turpentine-tree is thought to be referred to in some of these passages This tree is peculiar to the Eastern world, but like the oak, is remarkable for its lofty size, its luxuriant boughs, and for the great age to which it attains.

THE OLIVE.

Every child who has read the Bible will doubtless remember the story of Noah's dove returning to the ark with an olive-leaf in her mouth. God made use of the olive at that time as a sign of mercy and comfort to Noah, showing him that the waters had abated and that he might soon go forth again upon the dry land. Almost every nation upon the earth has regarded the olive-branch as an emblem of peace, and the custom is probably derived from this incident of the dove that came back to the ark with the olive-leaf.

The Jewish people took a great deal of pains to cultivate the olive. They admired its pale, silvery-green leaves, resembling the willow, and its clusters of beautiful white flowers, somewhat like the lilach in form and mode of growth. They were also very fond of its fruit, which is about the size of a plum and nearly black when ripe.

OLIVE FRUIT.

Those which you may have seen brought to this country in jars, are *green*, because they were gathered in an unripe state, and put into some liquid to preserve them and take away a portion of their rough and bitter taste.

But the chief value of the olive consists in the oil which is pressed from the fruit in great abundance, and is an important article of food to the natives of warm climates. They use it as freely as we do butter. They also burn it in their lamps, and it appears from Ex. 27 : 20, that it was employed for this purpose in the service of the tabernacle. This explains what is meant in Jotham's parable, Judges, 9 : 9, where the olive-tree is represented as saying, "Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?"

Olive-oil is of use also in medicine, to soothe pain, and heal the wounds made by poisonous insects and reptiles. On all these accounts the ancients highly esteemed the

olive, and in the Bible there is more honor put upon it than on any other tree. When any thing is compared to the olive, it is for the purpose of setting forth its excellence, its beauty, or its usefulness.

In Ps. 52 : 8, where the good man and the wicked are placed in strong contrast to each other, the former is said to be "like a green olive-tree in the house of God:" and again in Ps. 128 : 3, among the blessings promised to those who live in the fear of God, is this, "Thy children shall be like olive-plants round about thy table." In the flourishing days of Judea, when her people kept the precepts of the Lord, she was compared to "a green olive-tree, fair, and of goodly fruit." Jer. 11 : 16. And the prophet Hosea, when foretelling the glory of the Jewish church yet to come, uses this figure, "His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree."

In the 4th chapter of Zechariah there is a very remarkable vision described of two olive-trees standing on each side of a golden

candlestick, and pouring oil into it. This is thought to represent Christ and the Holy Spirit supplying the church with those gifts of divine grace which will make her a light to the whole earth.

I will refer you to only one more place in the Bible where the olive is used in an emblematical sense, but that is a very remarkable one, and contains a warning to which we shall all do well to take heed. The apostle Paul in the 11th chapter of Romans speaks of the Jews under the figure of the cultivated olive, and the Gentiles under that of the wild olive, which was less beautiful, and bore a meaner fruit than the other. But the Jews were separated from God on account of their rejection of Christ, and the Gentiles, or nations then Heathen, were converted and received in their stead. In speaking of this the apostle says, "And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree, boast not

against the branches: because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee." This shows us that unless we believe in Christ, and like him are meek and lowly in heart, we shall be cut off from the favor of God.

You doubtless recollect the *Mount of Olives*, so often mentioned in the New Testament. It lies east of Jerusalem, and so near that you can look down from it upon all the streets and buildings of the city. Our Savior often went there, to spend some time in retirement under the shade of the trees from which it received its name. There are still some large and ancient olives growing upon this mountain, and it is very likely, if not quite certain, that they sprang from the same roots as those standing there before our Savior suffered for sinners on the cross. We know that they cannot be the very same, for it is related in history, that during the siege of Jerusalem, which took place thirty or forty

years after the death of Christ, all the trees in the neighborhood of the city were cut down.

It was from the Mount of Olives that our Savior beholding Jerusalem, wept over it. Here was the garden of Gethsemane, where he prayed in such agony, and on one side of the mountain was Bethany, from whence he ascended into heaven.

THE PALM-TREE.

As there is no tree growing in our country which at all resembles the palm, it will be necessary to give a particular description of it. The stem is tall and straight, resembling a pillar, and nearly of the same thickness from bottom to top. It has no branches, but all the leaves grow in a tuft upon the summit, spreading out like rays and bending in a graceful curve towards the earth. Some times the leaves are as much as eight feet in

length, and so strong and tough as to be used to make bags, mats, fans, baskets, and even to cover tents and houses. They are pinnated, that is, in the form of feathers, each leaf being composed of a great number of long narrow leaflets, with a ridge in the middle like the keel of a boat. The trunk of the tree is not solid wood, but has a pith in the centre, as you may have seen in a stalk of Indian corn. The outside is very rugged, being full of notches all the way to the top; these are the vestiges of old leaves which die away as the tree advances in height.

The fruit of the palm grows in large clusters below the leaves, and is called *dates*. A single cluster will sometimes weigh 15 or 20 pounds, and there are frequently more than a dozen of these clusters upon a tree in one season, so that a date-palm is in some countries considered very valuable property, and is bought and sold like any other goods. It will live and bear fruit when more than a hundred years old, and is often found in

countries where it is almost the only tree. It flourishes also on those small fruitful spots in sandy deserts which are called *oases*, and in such situations it points out where water can be obtained. Elim, to which the Israelites came soon after crossing the Red Sea, was one of these isles of verdure in the midst of a sandy wilderness. It is recorded, Exod. 15 : 27, that they found there 12 wells of water and 70 palm-trees. With what delight must a wanderer upon the desert hail the appearance of a palm-tree, since it is an unfailing sign that a stream or fountain of water exists in the neighborhood.

The palm is one of the trees most useful to man, and a proof of the wisdom of its Creator, and of the kindness with which he has provided for the wants of his creatures. In those countries where it most abounds, there is scarcely any other wholesome vegetable to be found. Many persons in Egypt, Arabia and Persia have hardly any food but dates. During that part of the year when they cannot procure them fresh, they

subsist upon them dried, or pressed into cakes, forming a kind of date paste.

The Romans, when they wished to represent Judea upon their pictures and coins, drew the figure of a woman sitting under a palm-tree; from which we infer that this tree was formerly very common in Palestine, although now quite rare. It is often mentioned by the sacred writers, and in such a way as to show that they regarded it with admiration. Jericho, you will remember, was called "the city of palm-trees," in Deut. 34 : 3, and elsewhere. Deborah the prophetess dwelt under a palm-tree; or, as some think, in a grove of palm-trees, "between Ramah and Bethel." Judges, 4 : 5. One of the cities built by Solomon was "Tadmor in the wilderness." 1 Kings, 9 : 18. *Tadmor* signifies a palm; and the place was afterwards called Palmyra by the Greeks, which has the same meaning. Both names were probably given on account of the numerous palm-trees that surrounded it. *Tamar*, which is substantially the same word, was a favor-

ite female name among the Jews, and probably derived from the straight and graceful form of this tree.

In the most Holy Place, or Sanctuary of the temple built by Solomon, the walls and doors were covered "with carved figures of cherubims, and palm-trees, and open flowers, within and without." 1 Kings, 6 : 29, 32, 35. This seems to show that the Jews attached some peculiar sacred meaning to this emblem, and it is thought that they intended to express by it, the *divine light* which illuminates the souls of devout worshippers; for the palm tree has been used not only by the Jews, but by many other nations, as a symbol of *light*, on account of the tufted leaves which radiate from its head, like the beams of the sun. The royal poet of Israel used the palm-tree, as well as the olive and cedar, to illustrate the majesty and beauty of a good man. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree." Psalm 92 : 12.

In festivals and seasons of rejoicing after a victory, the ancients carried branches of

palm through the streets. When it was known that the Savior was on his way to Jerusalem to keep the feast of the passover, a great multitude "took branches of palm-trees and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." John, 12 : 13.

The same apostle that records this scene of triumph, after his risen Lord had ascended to heaven, beheld in vision another glorious throng bearing in their hands the same symbols of everlasting joy. "Lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Rev. 7 : 9, 10.

If we, as the righteous man described by David, "flourish like the palm-tree" in a life of usefulness and piety; and magnify the Lord our King and our Redeemer like the

people that hailed his approach to Jerusalem, we shall at last join the happy host described by John in such lofty and beautiful terms, and worship God and the Lamb for ever and ever.

THE PINE.

This tree belongs to the same family as the Cedar and the Fir. The wise and good Creator of all things, who has so liberally endowed the trees of the earth with grace, beauty and utility, has made the pine tall and stately, and peculiarly fitted it to serve for the masts of large ships. It combines all the qualities necessary for this purpose, the stem being straight and of sufficient length; strong, yet at the same time light and elastic.

It is supposed that there are more pine-trees in the world than of any other sort. They will grow upon very barren land, and

in very cold climates; upon high mountains, and among rocky cliffs, where there is very little earth to nourish them.

"Where summer ever smiles with verdure crowned,
"Where winter flings his storms, the pine is found;
"With heaven-aspiring head erect it grows
"Mid burning suns and everlasting snows."

The pine occurs only three times in the Bible. In Nehemiah, 8 : 15, it is enumerated among the trees whose branches were used to make the booths, or tents of boughs, in which the Israelites resided for a short period every year, in memory of their having dwelt in such rude habitations when they were first delivered from the bondage of Egypt, and had not yet built them houses in the land of Canaan. The prophet Isaiah also twice mentions the pine: he uses it in connection with the fir, box, and other evergreen trees to represent the flourishing state of the church; and its upright form and majestic stature make the comparison striking and appropriate.

THE POMEGRANATE

THE POMEGRANATE.

The Pomegranate was very early cultivated in Egypt and Syria. It abounds in the south of Europe and the north of Africa. There is one species which grows in the southern part of the United States. The fruit is very grateful in hot countries, being a mild, agreeable acid, blended with sweetness. This is considered the peculiarity of the pomegranate, that it is "sour yet sweet."

It is a small tree, but very beautiful; valued for ornament as well as for use. The branches are thick, the leaves spear-shaped and of a polished green, the flowers large and of a brilliant scarlet color. It continues blossoming and bearing fruit for several months, making a very splendid appearance. The birds that warble among its boughs add another charm to the scene. Travellers say that in the East "the nightingale sings from the pomegranate groves in the day-time."

The fruit varies from the size of a lemon to that of an orange. The outside is rough and tawny; within it contains a great number of reddish purple seeds, mingled with juicy pulp. In Barbary they sometimes grow so large as to weigh a pound.

We will now see what is said about it in the Holy Scriptures. The Pomegranate was one of the fruits to which the children of Israel were accustomed in the land of Egypt, as appears by their complaining of the want of it in the desert. Numb. 20 : 5. It was mentioned by Moses as one of the valuable productions of the promised land, Deut. 8 : 8, and the spies brought a specimen of it from Eshcol, at the same time that they cut down that wonderful cluster of grapes which was so large that two men carried it between them on a staff. Num. 13 : 23.

The figure of the pomegranate was embroidered upon the hem of the robe of the high-priest alternately with the golden bells that were fastened to it. Ex. 28 : 33, 34. We do not know whether this was done

merely for beauty, or whether there was some emblematic meaning conveyed in it. Some suppose that the pomegranates and bells joined together intimate both the sweet savor and joyful sound of the tidings of salvation which the high-priest was commissioned to announce. For the Gospel is a "savor of life" unto them that hear the sound and believe and obey it. You should never forget in reading the Old Testament that all the observances of the law of Moses were types or emblems of Christ and the blessings which he procures for man.

The pomegranate was used also on another sacred occasion. When Solomon built the temple at Jerusalem for the worship of the true God, he had two very large brazen pillars set up in the porch, to which he gave the names of Jachin and Boaz, or Stability and Strength. The tops of these pillars were ornamented with wreaths of pomegranates in two rows, wrought in brass, one hundred in each row, making 400 on the two pillars. 1 Kings, 7 : 18; 2 Ch. 4 : 13.

This must have been very beautiful, but as in the case of the high-priest's garment we cannot certainly determine that any particular sentiment was expressed by it.

The pomegranate is mentioned several times in the Song of Solomon, and by the prophets, and always in a manner that shows a high value was set upon it. This was probably before the orange, the lemon, peach and some other delicious fruits were introduced into Palestine, which have since in some measure taken the place of the pomegranate, and it is not therefore so much cultivated for its fruit as formerly.

THE ROSE.

This Queen of the Garden is so well known that no particular description of it need be given. Yet we must not suppose that the rose-bearing shrubs of our coun-

try, beautiful as they are, can vie with the rose-tree of the East, which is sometimes twelve and even fourteen feet high, and has wide-spreading branches laden with thousands of buds and blossoms, in every degree of expansion, filling the air around with fragrance. Neither have we any nightingales to sing all night long among their boughs. But we have blessings enough to increase our gratitude and love to the Father of mercies

> "Who spreads the earth with fragrant flowers,
> "And bids the lofty cedars grow."

Let us be careful to make a right use of the gifts that the providence of God so liberally bestows on us, and not repine that others are in some respects more favored than we are.

The prophet Isaiah, to describe the spread of the glorious Gospel of Christ, uses this beautiful illustration: "The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy

and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon." Is. 35 : 1, 2. Carmel and Sharon were districts of Palestine remarkable for fertility, and the trees and flowers which they produced were doubtless more perfect than elsewhere.

"I am the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the valleys." Sol. Song, 2 : 1. How beautiful is this emblem of Christ! Who will not give their hearts to a Savior that appears before them in a form so lovely and attractive.

SPIKENARD.

Many aromatic or strong-scented plants have been called by this name. There is one in this country sometimes cultivated in gardens as a medicinal herb. But the true *nard* or *spike-nard*, seems to have been produced in its perfection only in India. It is

still found in that country, and is described as a grass-like plant which grows in tufts, the stalks being three or four feet high. When rubbed or bruised it gives forth a delightful fragrance.

An ointment was prepared from this plant which the ancients very highly esteemed. They used it to soften and perfume the skin. It was brought from India in small sealed boxes, and the Romans as well as the nations farther east paid a high price for it.

We read, Mark, 14 : 3, that while our Savior was reclining at supper in the house of Simon at Bethany, "there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, [probably it means the wax that sealed the box,] and poured it on his head." In verse 5 the value of this ointment is stated,—"it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence,"—that is, about forty dollars of our money. From this we conclude that it was the Indian spikenard which the woman used, that being the most rare and

costly perfume of that age. We learn from John, 12 : 3, that this woman was Mary, the sister of Lazarus. By this act she obtained that "good name which is better than precious ointment;" for Christ commended her for thus showing her faith and love, and added, "Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

The circumstances of this scene remind us of a text in the Song of Solomon, "While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." Ch. 1 : 12. Christ is the King: and the faith, love, zeal, and other fruits of the Spirit exhibited by those who trust in him, are "as ointment poured forth."

THE SYCAMORE.

In this country the button-wood or plane-tree is frequently called the sycamore; but the sycamore of the East, so often mentioned in the Bible, is a very different tree. It is the same as the Egyptian fig-tree; and frequently grows so large that three men, with their arms stretched out, can scarcely reach around the trunk. Its shade covers a large extent of ground, and groups of people often gather under it to be screened from the fierce rays of the sun.

Zaccheus, you will remember, climbed up into a sycamore-tree that he might see the Savior as he entered Jericho. He was a small man and unable to see for the crowd, and he therefore ran before and climbed a sycamore, which was probably a noted tree on the road along which Jesus was to pass, and under which it was natural to suppose he would rest awhile. "And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and saw

him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." Luke, 19 : 5. The Savior saw him before he climbed the tree, and he now invited himself to his house. Happy Zaccheus! he saw Jesus on earth and "received him joyfully" into his dwelling. We also may see him with the eye of faith, and receive him by love into our hearts. We shall then hereafter behold him in his glory, and dwell with him for ever in that house "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, whose builder and maker is God."

The name *sycamore* is composed of two words *sukos* and *morus*, one of which in the Greek language signifies a fig-tree and the other signifies a mulberry; and it was thus named because the leaf of this tree is like that of a mulberry and the fruit very nearly resembles a fig. It is sometimes called the *wild fig-tree*. The fruit grows upon short stalks around the trunk and larger branches of the tree, and though inferior to the real fig, it is the common food of the inhabitants

of Egypt and of some other countries. It is therefore a very valuable tree, especially as it bears fruit two or three times every year. This will explain to you why it was reckoned among the judgments of the Egyptians in the time of Pharaoh, that the Lord "destroyed their sycamore-trees with frost." Ps. 78 : 47.

We learn from 1 Ch. 27 : 28, that David appointed a particular person to take care "of the olive-trees and the sycamore-trees," which shows that the fruit was of considerable importance. The prophet Amos, when the Lord called him to deliver his message to the people of Israel, "was a herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit." Amos, 7 : 14.

While we reflect on the goodness of God in bestowing the various fruits of the earth in such abundance upon man, let us take heed that we be not ourselves barren and unfruitful, but that we abound in every good word and work, and bring forth fruit to the glory of our Father and Redeemer.

TARE.

This plant is not mentioned in the Bible except in the parable of the wheat and the tares in the 13th chapter of Matthew. It is supposed to mean what in this country is called *darnel,* which is a grass-like weed that grows very tall and rank. In the East it is very apt to come up among the wheat, and at first very nearly resembles it; for it has similar stems and leaves and grows as high, but it either produces no fruit or none that is good for food. This makes the Savior's comparison of it to "the children of the wicked one" very striking.

It is especially an apt illustration of the hypocrite, that is of the person who pretends to be good, and keeps a fair outside, but who does not in his heart repent of sin and forsake it.

In this world the good and the bad often grow together, and we cannot look into their hearts and discern their characters. But

from the parable of the tares we learn, that at the great day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, it will be discovered who was sincere and who was not; the good and bad will then be separated. "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

Thus we see that everlasting sorrow and misery will be the portion of those who, living in a christian land, do not show the fruits of christianity in their temper and conduct. It is good for us to be often reminded of this humbling and alarming truth.

THE VINE.

"And Noah began to be a husbandman, and he planted a vineyard." Gen. 9 : 20. This carries us back to the first mention made of the vine in history. Thus early was its cultivation made a branch of industry.

The vine is one of the choicest gifts of Providence to the inhabitants of warm climates. It spreads its branches far and wide, shooting out its tendrils towards every neighboring object, and forming a bower-like shade from the sultry sun, while its goodly clusters of fruit please the taste and satisfy the hungry appetite. What then can be more sinful than to abuse this good gift of the Creator by making it serve for the purposes of noisy mirth and drunkenness!

The juice of the grape, when first pressed out and before any fermentation has taken place, is sweet, and does not possess any of that fiery, injurious quality which produces intoxication. It was in this unfermented

state, probably, that it was used in those instances in the Bible where its use is spoken of with approbation. After fermentation has taken place, and it has become an intoxicating liquor, all unnecessary use of it should be most carefully avoided. To drink wine as a beverage out of compliment to others, or to please one's own taste, if not positively forbidden in Scripture as sinful, is a dangerous practice both to soul and body, and as an example is injurious in its influence.

Let this be your decision and abide firmly by it: "Entire abstinence is safe; but even a moderate and occasional use is beset with temptation and danger to myself and to others; therefore on no pretence or consideration whatever will I drink wine unnecessarily."

In some parts of Palestine the vine grew in great beauty and luxuriance. Clusters of grapes might be found that weighed ten and twelve pounds. The one cut down at Eshcol, as related Numb. 13 : 23, has already been mentioned. A choice vineyard contained as

many as a thousand vines, and rented yearly for a thousand pieces of silver. Isaiah, 7 : 23. Solomon had a vineyard of this size at Baal-hamon, as we learn from Sol. Song, 8 : 12, 13. But when vines are cultivated for the purpose of making wine they are usually planted in rows, clipt very short and fastened to poles. This to the eye of taste robs them of all their beauty. We love to think of a vine as spreading over a tree or a portico, trailing along walls or adorning the poor man's cottage. It is an excellent custom in hot climates to plant a vine by the side of a well. This is trained over a frame of net-work, and forms an arbor which affords a cool retreat even at mid-day. The patriarch Jacob had perhaps such an image as this in his mind when he said, "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall." Gen. 49 : 22. From vines trained in this way near dwellings, for their shade and fruit, was derived the expression used by Micah and others of the prophets, "they

shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree." Mic. 4:4. It became a proverbial phrase to indicate a state of enjoyment, repose and security.

The Jews had so high an esteem for the vine that it was often used as the symbol of their nation. "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like goodly cedars." Ps. 80: 8, 9. The prophet Isaiah pursues the same beautiful allegory: "My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill." He represents this vineyard as planted, watered and guarded by the Lord of Hosts, and in conclusion explains his meaning thus, "For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant." Is. 5: 1–7.

Were we to collect all the passages in the Bible which refer to the vine, and say but a

few words about each, it would of itself more than fill a small volume like this; but there is one place in the New Testament where it forms an illustration too striking and important to be passed over. It is used to show the intimate relation which exists between the Lord Jesus Christ and all his true followers, and is thus expressed in the Savior's own beautiful words: "I am the true Vine and my Father is the Husband man. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." John, 15 : 1–5.

There is also another passage which I should like to explain to you. When the grapes were gathered and thrown into the wine-press, they were first trodden down by

men, and afterwards the juice was pressed out. Isaiah represents the Savior as saying, "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me." 63 : 3. Our Lord Jesus accomplished the whole work of our redemption without any aid from man or angel; he triumphed over sin and death, and as it were trod them down, so that they will never be able to overcome any of his true followers again. It is said, Rev. 19 : 15, 16, "he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." How dreadful it is to be an enemy of God and exposed to the wrath of the great Head of the church, who will come forth at the day of judgment to receive the good into everlasting happiness, but to tread down and destroy the wicked for ever.

The law of Moses contained many wise regulations respecting the vine. The owners were commanded when they gathered their

grapes to leave some hanging for the poor. "Thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and the stranger." Lev. 19 : 10. Every seventh year the whole produce was to be left for the poor. A traveller was permitted to eat grapes from another man's vines as he passed along, but not to carry any away. Deut. 23 : 24. These laws show that God is a God of mercy, manifesting a tender compassion and care for the destitute and the stranger.

WHEAT.

Wheat is a plant of the grass kind; it has hollow jointed stalks, long and narrow leaves, and dry, husky flowers growing close together in what is called an ear. The flowers enclose the seed or grain, which when ripe is threshed out and ground into flour to make bread. The stalks when dry are call-

ed straw, and when the grain is separated all the refuse part is chaff.

When the soil is fertile several ears will be produced by one stalk. In the dream of Pharaoh, it is said, "behold seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk rank and good." Gen. 41 : 5. This represented a very luxuriant growth. You observe that in the text just quoted *corn* is the word used, though *wheat* is what is meant. In the Old Testament all kinds of grain are included in the term corn; you must not therefore suppose when the word is used that it alludes to the maize or Indian corn, which in the United States is exclusively called corn, and which is a kind of grain not known in ancient times.

The English translation of the Bible which we use was made more than two centuries ago, and since that time the meaning of some words has considerably changed. The word *meat* is another instance. We now understand by it the flesh of animals, but in the Bible it never has that meaning; it signifies either food of all kinds, or some kind of

grain. The meat-offering that was presented in the temple worship, Lev. ch. 2, was composed of fine wheat, either in the simple state of flour or baked into cakes, and would now perhaps be called a bread-offering.

The two most important grains for the service of man are wheat and rice. The latter is the chief article of subsistence to many millions of people in the hottest climates of the globe; but it was not cultivated for food in Palestine, and is not any where mentioned in the Bible. Wheat, on the contrary, was one of the main articles of produce. Moses calls Canaan "a land of wheat," Deut. 8:8; and it was in that land that Isaac sowed "and received in the same year a hundred fold." Gen. 26:12.

Grain is often used in Scripture as an emblem of a future state, and if you will consider the subject attentively, you will find the comparison very striking. A grain of wheat is sown in the ground, where it lies and apparently decays; but when spring returns, it revives, shoots up into light, flou-

THE WILLOW.

rishes and produces fruit. This is an expressive symbol and almost a pledge of the resurrection of the body. Christ said, in reference to his own approaching death, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." John, 12 : 24.

Wheat is also used to represent the character and future condition of the righteous, in contrast with the wicked, who are regarded as the chaff." He will gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Mat. 3 : 12. "The ungodly are like the chaff which the wind driveth away." Ps. 1 : 4.

THE WILLOW.

There are several different kinds of this tree known in our country, but they all delight in a wet soil, and grow best by the water-side. The various allusions to the

willow in the Bible have a reference to this peculiarity of their growth. Among "the boughs of goodly trees," to be used at the feast of tabernacles, "the willows of the brook" were not to be neglected. Lev. 23 : 40. The prophet Isaiah speaks of "the brook of the willows," 15 : 7; and of "willows by the water-courses," 44 : 4. Ezekiel compares the flourishing colony of Jews left by Nebuchadnezzar in Judea to the planting of a willow tree "by great waters." 17 : 5.

The osier is a small species of willow, which grows in swamps and fenny places, and is used in basket-work. The yellow willow is also employed for the same purpose.

The white willow often attains a large size and is valuable for timber; it is also graceful in its form and foliage. But the most ornamental of this family is the weeping or Babylonian willow, which bends down its long leaves and branches so as to touch the ground or trail on the waters. This is supposed to be the willow referred to in the plaintive song of the Jewish captives at

Babylon, Ps. 137. "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof."

WORMWOOD.

Wormwood in Scripture is always used to denote something peculiarly offensive. An Israelite turning to idolatry is said to be "a root that beareth gall and wormwood." Deut. 29 : 18. The consequences of a wicked life are declared by Solomon to be "bitter as wormwood." Prov. 5 : 4. When the Lord of Hosts denounces heavy judgments upon idolaters, he says, "Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink." Jer. 9 : 15.

The same figurative language is used in other places to express extreme misery,— "Remembering mine affliction and my

misery, the wormwood and the gall." Lam. 3: 19.

The plant which we call Wormwood, though intensely bitter, has some medicinal properties, and is on the whole of a salutary rather than of a hurtful nature. This has led some to infer that the plant mentioned in Scripture is not the same, but some unknown herb, perhaps possessing poisonous qualities. It is probable, however, that it is of the same family as the common wormwood, though it may be a more noxious species.

Perhaps the most striking passage in the Bible relating to wormwood is Rev. 8: 10, 11, when at the sounding of an angel's trumpet "there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood; and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters because they were made bitter."

Learned men have not been able to de-

cide what is signified by this remarkable scene, but many suppose that it refers to the destruction of the Roman empire.

It is of less consequence to us to find out the precise meaning of obscure prophecies than it is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and obey his precepts. Any other course will lead to that end which is bitter as "the wormwood and the gall."

"Know, therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God." Jer. 2: 19.

The plan proposed in this little work has been completed, the articles written, the end reached; but she who formed the plan, who wrote the address to the young with which it commences, and had in part accomplished her task, did not live to complete it. She was advancing in the work when her hand ceased to write, her mind to conceive, her heart to beat. She loved the young; her life had been in a great measure devoted

to their instruction, and this her last effort was designed to do them good. But God called her away, and another hand follows in her course and fills up the outline that she had left unfinished.

What an affecting lesson is here!—the young author laying down her pen in the midst of her work to drop into the grave!

"How many fall as sudden, not as safe!"

O ye who read, take this admonition to your heart. "We all do fade as a leaf." Is. 64 : 6. Therefore be wise, and improve the days that are given. "Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life." 1 Tim. 6 : 12.

"Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?" Jer. 3 : 4.

"I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. 6 : 17, 18.

THE END.

This book should be returned to the Library on or before the last date stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred by retaining it beyond the specified time.

Please return promptly.

MAR 12 '57

JAN 8 1958

5089522

CANCELLED 1975